

## **ARLINGTON PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINTUES**

*April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021*

The Town of Arlington Park and Recreation Commission came to order for its online virtual meeting via Zoom on Tuesday April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 7:00pm.

**Commission Members:** Leslie Mayer, Jen Rothenberg, Phil Lasker, Shirley Canniff, Scott Walker, and Associate Members Sarah Carrier & Scott Lever were present. Recreation Director Joe Connelly and Program Supervisor Zachary Vaillette were also in attendance.

**Anticipated Speakers:** Emily Sullivan, Adrienne Landry, Lauren Jaeger, Nishaad Vinayak, Catherine Saleh, Lori Talanian

**Members of the Public:** Lisa Mahoney, Elaine Blackman

**Preliminary Matter:** Leslie Mayer, Park & Recreation Commission Chair, took formal attendance via a roll call. Ms. Mayer read a statement pertaining to Governor Baker's Public Meeting Law change due to COVID-19 regarding virtual meetings. Meeting business ground rules and procedures were also covered by Ms. Mayer.

### **Open Forum – Public Comment**

N/A

### **Correspondence Received**

N/A

### **Request AHS Senior Sunrise Event**

Catherine Saleh and Lori Talanian, parents of AHS seniors, were present to speak on this request. In replacement of the traditional senior cruise event that occurs for AHS seniors, the class is looking to hold a Senior Sunrise event at Robbins Farm Park. The event will actually take place over two days, with up to (150) students attending each day. Students will arrive to Robbins Farm Park around 4:50am. The goal of this event is to provide a platform in which seniors are able to watch a sunrise and reflect on their time at AHS. This event is something that many other schools around the country are doing. The Senior Sunrise provides a platform to bring students back together before they graduate. Ms. Saleh and Ms. Talanian stated that the event will follow all State and Town COVID protocols & guidelines. Event organizers plan to work with the Town BOH and are even willing to do COVID pool testing if necessary, in order for this to occur. The event will be chaperoned by parents of AHS seniors and at least (1) school administrator. A police detail will also be present each morning. Students must preregister and will only be allowed to attend one day. As part of this request, the parents are looking to have a large cut outs made for the numbers "2021". These cardboard numbers will each be approximately 8 feet tall and self-standing. They will serve as a silhouette in the sunrise and will be used a background/prop for pictures. The cutout numbers will be secured down and will be installed/removed each day. Cones will be placed on the hillside at the Robbins Farm Park to mark spaces for students to sit and safely social distance. Masks will be required to be worn at all times. No food will be provided to students onsite. Each student will receive a coffee mug and Dunkin Donuts gift card to use at a later time. It was also noted that organizers would like to have acoustic sunrise music playing onsite at a very low level, so it will not be heard by neighbors. They plan to test volume levels onsite prior to the actual event. Event organizers would also like to have tea lights in flame resistant luminary bags, which will be placed around the perimeter of where the students are sitting to provide light and ambiance. Both individuals reiterated how important this event will be to the seniors, once again stating that it will be a quiet and calm event.

Mr. Connelly noted that the BOH is aware of this plan and in support if all outlined protocols are followed. At this time, Commission Members had the opportunity to speak on the proposed Senior Sunrise event. In summary, all Commissioners showed their support. Items of concern that were discussed and focused on were the luminary bags, music, and 2021 cutout. The Commission is okay with the event moving forward as discussed with the exception of music being played. There are concerns about music being played so early in the morning and sound traveling to local abutters. It was determined that this will be removed from the event request and their plan. Commission Members also discussed the importance of students following a carry in and carry out policy.

At this time, Ms. Rothenberg made the motion to approve the Senior Sunrise event(s) at Robbins Farm Park, as discussed (no music, carry in/out policy, BOH regulations). This motion was seconded by Ms. Canniff. The motion to approve the AHS Senior Sunrise event as discussed was approved by the Commission 5-0 at 7:30pm.

On behalf of the Arlington High School Seniors and their parents, Ms. Saleh and Ms. Talanian thanked the Commission and Friends of Robbins Farm Park for supporting this event. Elaine Blackman of the Friends will help spread the word with local residents to inform them that this event is occurring.

**Planting Request Spy Pond and Thorndike Field – Adrienne Landry and Lauren Jaeger**

Arlington resident Adrienne Landry lives at the Spy Pond Condos and was present on the call to speak on a planting request at Spy Pond. She has been weeding invasive species at Spy Pond for a while and has removed numerous invasive species from the planting beds there. In general, she has been removing invasives at locations along the Bike Path since 2008. With the removal, she is looking to place (3) fragrant sumac plants in one of the Spy Pond beds. Fragrant sumac is a native species that grows low, only 2-3 feet tall and 6-8 feet wide. The species turns bright red in the fall and will be a great addition to the property. Ms. Landry noted that this species is low maintenance with watering needed 2-3 times a week at first, then only twice a month regularly. Ms. Landry presented research on the cost of this request and noted that she and several others are willing to take on the watering responsibilities. Mr. Connelly noted that he believes there is a watering source close to the proposed planting bed. He will look into this. With the estimated cost of the plantings being less than \$200.00, Mr. Connelly stated that the Department would be able to find funding and cover these costs if approved. Commission members asked several general questions. All members were in support of these proposed plantings.

At this time, Ms. Caniff made the motion to approve the proposed plantings at Spy Pond, as discussed. This motion was seconded by Ms. Rothenberg. The motion for the plantings at Spy Pond Park was approved by the Commission 5-0 at 7:43pm.

Ms. Landry thanked Mr. Connelly and the Commission. She also noted safety concerns regarding individuals riding bikes down the path at Spy Pond. This concern was acknowledged and it was stated that it would need to be a larger discussion regarding bike traffic through pedestrian areas in all parks.

Mr. Connelly noted that there was an additional planting request made by Lauren Jaeger for plantings at Thorndike Park. The proposal is for wildflowers to be planted around the outskirts of the Thorndike property. It was noted that Emily Sullivan of Conservation would be in support of this. Mr. Connelly is not opposed to these plantings but just wanted to state on record that there is a formal process for plantings on park grounds. Commissioners discussed this proposal. Ms. Canniff is very concerned about this request. With the proposed species being wildflowers, she believes that is very likely that the species will spread naturally and impact the field conditions. She shared a story regarding a neighbor which had a similar problem. Other Commissioners also shared this concern. With concerns regarding the species type and location, no vote was taken. Ms. Jaeger was not present on the call. Mr. Connelly plans to follow up to inform her of this and will inquire if there is a possible alternative planting locations that are not close to an athletic field.

**AYBSA Batting Cage Request for McClennan Park to Replace the Unit at Poets**

Mr. Connelly outlined this request. Richard Flynn and Paul Carroll of baseball were anticipated to be present for this discussion, but were not. When the tennis courts were removed from Poet's Field in 2020, the anchor system for the existing batting cage there was damaged. With uncertainty about future projects and usage of Poet's, a batting cage installation at McClennan Park is being proposed as a replacement. The proposed area for this is near the outfield fence at McClennan. The location was intended to be used for a scoreboard placement but was not. Mr. Connelly believes that this is a great location as it will get a lot of use at this location and the system will fit, as there is at least 10 feet of space in all directions. There is an electric hook up as well, which could be used for a pitching machine. Mr. Lasker asked about the McClennan cap in terms of installation. Mr. Connelly stated that the property is capped as it was an old landfill. The cap is several feet down. There is other infrastructure in place, so this should not be an issue. The batting cage system's anchors cannot go deeper than the cap. If so, this location cannot be used. With questions regarding this and the proposed system (anchors, foundation, sleeves, etc.), this matter will be tabled. The proposed installation of a batting cage at McClennan will be discussed at a future meeting.

**Eagle Scout Project – Menotomy Rocks Park – Nishaad Vinayak**

Arlington High School student and Boy Scout, Nishaad Vinayak, was present on the call to speak on his proposal for an Eagle Scout Project at Menotomy Rocks Park. He discussed the project in detail, outlining the entrances to the park and how they can become very muddy during the wet seasons. At the Shawnee Rd. entrance where the work is being proposed, the terrain is very rocky and can be difficult to maneuver. Due to issues with the current conditions, Nishaad is proposing a path

renovation for his project which will include the installation of a raised board walk, approximately 15 yards long. This was discussed in further detail. Metal reinforcement would be installed at certain locations. The path would be in alignment to the current path and would be wide enough to allow for 2 individuals to pass each other. The goal of this would be to improve access and accessibility to the park. At this time, Commissioners shared thoughts and feedback. Mr. Connelly stated the Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park Group is aware and in support. Questions regarding installation and maintenance came up. Initial work and possible long-term maintenance would be done by fellow Boy Scouts. Mr. Walker asked about possible funding. Nishaad believes it would be a combination between donations, crowd sourcing, and Town funds. It was noted that the location had previously had a project done by the Girl Scouts. The idea to look at this project and location for Nishaad's Eagle Scout project was suggested by Town Official Christian Klein. Mr. Lasker asked about the grade. He also suggested that he should reach out to New England Mountain Biking Association President, Adam Glick, who has experience building wooden board walks. Discussions around this, high water levels, and materials were discussed. Plastic wood and sand paper grip were suggested for materials, as concerns of material were brought up. This location was confirmed as an access point to the property. Concerns of high lumber costs were also noted. With questions regarding grade, materials, and funding, it was decided that Nishaad would gather more information and report back to the Commission. All Commission Members are excited about this potential project and are in support. More information and data are needed before moving forward though. Mr. Connelly will work with Nishaad and he will report back to the Commission on the Eagle Scout project proposal at a future meeting.

### **Capital Projects Update**

#### ***Reservoir Phase II Building Project***

Mr. Connelly reported that the building project is going well. Mr. Walker and he continue to meet onsite with the contractor weekly. The project was previously a week behind schedule, but the contractor has reduced this delay. Mr. Connelly noted that the building work has had some change orders, but these will have no major impact. Mr. Connelly reported that the injector pump may need to be replaced and was not included in the original scope of the project. This matter will look at in the near future by individuals from Weston and Sampson.

#### ***Reservoir Phase II Site Work Project***

Mr. Connelly reported that project site work is moving along. The water level inside the swimming area will need to remain at its current level, which allows the water filters to be submerged. The goal was to lower the water levels following the training; however the system will need to continue to be on in order for a smooth transition into beach season. The main water level will be lowered to allow for embankment restoration and boat ramp work to take place. Mr. Connelly noted that a pump system will be needed in order to maintain water levels in the beach area. Mr. Connelly reported that several Town of Arlington and Town of Lexington employees met at Rindge Park to discuss the location being used as an access point for contractors working on the Reservoir project. Officials present representing Lexington included individuals from Engineering, DPW, and Recreation. Individuals from SumCo and KZLA were also present. Mr. Connelly reported that this meeting went well. An open discussion occurred regarding the property line. It was previously noted that a part of the property in this park is actually Town of Arlington property. Lexington recently received a CPA Grant to make an accessible pathway from the Rindge property to the Arlington Reservoir path. Overall, the Town of Lexington Town Manager is onboard with allowing this as an access point. Mr. Connelly does not anticipate any issues.

#### ***ADA Path Summer Street Complex***

Mr. Connelly is currently working with KZLA on this project's timeline. Items to note include a change order in relation to an irrigation box which needs to be moved. Mr. Connelly is also requesting that (2) benches be moved, as they back up to the Buck Field outfield fence and are not protected by safety netting system in place. There are currently no ADA accessible bleachers onsite. Mr. Connelly is looking into the cost of this.

### **Recreation and Rink Updates**

Program Supervisor Zach Vaillette provided this update. The department offered several April Vacation Week Programs including soccer, basketball, and multi-sport clinics. The department continues to plan for summer programs. Mr. Connelly provided several brief updates including information on a collaboration with the Arlington Boys and Girls Club. Recreation will be working with them to offer a lifeguard training for potential Arlington Recreation summer employees.

### **Approval of Minutes – 4/13/21**

The approval of the Park and Recreation Commission April 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes was discussed. It was determined that the approval of these meeting minutes will be tabled until the next Commission Meeting to allow for more review time.

### **Comments and Items for Future Meetings**

- a. Future Field Use, Rental, and Lease Agreements*
- b. Carry In Carry Out Policy in Parks*
- c. Off Leash Dog Concerns*
- d. Eagle Scout Project at Magnolia: Picnic Table Status*
- e. Batting Cages*
- f. Bikes in Parks*

### **Other**

The next Park and Recreation Commission Meeting will occur on Tuesday, May 11<sup>th</sup>. Items to note discussed under the other section include the following

- Continued Issues regarding off leash dogs in Parks
- Crusher Lot Clean Up
- Previously discussed possibility of dock at Spy Pond
- Recent Robbins Farm Tree Plantings

Ms. Canniff made the motion to adjourn the meeting. This motion was seconded by Mr. Walker. Motion to adjourn the meeting was approved by Commissioners, 5-0, at 9:18pm. The Arlington Park & Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes were respectfully submitted by Program Supervisor, Zachary Vaillette.